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BOROUGH OF WENLOCK URBAN DISTRICT

REPORT

- of the -

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

- for the year -

1937.

BOROUGH OF WENLOCK URBAN DISTRICT.

R E P O R T of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1937.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY.

Medical Officer of Health. M. GEPP, D.P.H. (S.W. Salop Combined Districts).

Sanitary Inspector. C. J. Thomas, Certificate Royal Sanitary Institute, also Inspector under Shops Act.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (in acres). 22,657.

Registrar-General's estimate of resident population mid 1937. 13,640

Number of inhabited houses (end of 1937) according to Rate Books. 3,909

Rateable Value. £43,744. Sum represented by a penny rate. £163.

Social Conditions. The District is, as to about one fifth of its area, but as to three fourths of the population, industrial in character. The remaining four fifths of the area, with one fourth of the population, is purely agricultural. The decline of the old coal and iron industries has left evidence of derelict works and mines, and the consequent decline of population caused a number of old houses also to become derelict. The chief existing industries are brick and tile making, encaustic tile works, three modern engineering works which employ many hands, and a toy factory recently established.

Up to some eight years ago when the Council, through its Committees, began building in the Wenlock, Broseley and Madeley Wards, there had been very little building of working class houses for a period of 50 years or more; there being in consequence much house property of old and inferior standard, of low rental value and occupied in considerable proportion by small wage earners.

The number of houses which have now been built, and are owned, by the Council already represents some ten per cent of the total inhabited houses.

VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

		Total.	M.	F.		
Live Births	Legitimate	239	116	123	Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population.	18.3
	Illegitimate	11	9	2		
Stillbirths		10	3	7	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births.	38.
Deaths		199	109	90	Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population.	14.6

Deaths from puerperal causes:	Deaths.	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births.
No. 29. Puerperal sepsis	nil	nil
No. 30. Other puerperal causes	1	4
Total	1	4

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:-	Number.	Rate.
All infants per 1,000 live births ..	17	68
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	17	71
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	-	Nil

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) 23.

" " Measles (all ages) nil.

" " Whooping Cough (all ages) 1.

" " Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) 1.

	Wenlock U.D.	England & Wales.
Birth rate per 1,000 of population	18.3	14.9
Death rate " " " " { Crude	14.6	12.4
Death rate " " " " { Corrected	12.7	
Infant death rate per 1,000 born	68.	58.

The population of the Borough in 1937 is estimated by the Registrar General as 13,640, or 100 persons less than in 1936, and 509 less than at the Census of 1931.

The Birth rate in the Borough for the year was some 23 per cent above that of the Country generally, and at present tends to avoid the general progressive decline.

Birth rate in the District per 1,000 population	1937	18.3
	1936	16.3
	1935	16.9
	Average of 5 years 1931-35 ..	16.2
	" " 10 " 1921-30 ..	18.4

Of the total 260 (live and still) births, 11, or 4.2 per cent, were illegitimate.

The death rate for the year, when corrected for age and sex distribution, was a fraction above that of the Country generally. The deaths from Influenza and pneumonia were considerably above, and those from tuberculosis much below, those of the previous year.

		Crude.	Corrected.
Death rate in the District per 1,000 population	1937	14.6	12.7
	1936	13.4	11.7
	1935	13.6	11.8
	Average of 5 years 1931-35 ..	14.7	12.8
	" " 10 " 1921-30 ..	13.8	-

No death was due to Measles, Scarlet fever or Diphtheria. One death was due to Cerebro-spinal fever, and 1 to Encephalitis lethargica. Whooping Cough caused 1 death, influenza 12, pulmonary tuberculosis 5, other tuberculosis 1, cancer 23, cerebral haemorrhage 22, diabetes 4, heart disease 51, bronchitis 7, pneumonia 14. Four deaths were suicidal, and 5 were caused by accident.

Deaths of infants under 1 year per 1,000 born	1937	68.
	1936	40.
	1935	60.
	Average of 5 years 1931-35	67.
	" " 10 years 1921-30	58.

The infant mortality rate is one which tends to show considerable variation from year to year without sanitary significance. In the past year in the Borough the rate was comparatively high; in the previous year low. For the three past years 1935-1937 the average was 56, which is a little below that of the Country generally.

There were 17 infant deaths, of which 11 were due to conditions classed as 'Congenital Debility', due to ante-natal conditions in the health of expectant mothers, for the avoidance of which the advice and treatment available at the Child Welfare Centre is specially directed. Ten weakly infants died within a week of birth, and six survived more than one month. The mortality was mainly in the Madeley Ward and as the well equipped Child Welfare Centre is situated there, it is much to be desired that all expectant mothers in that area should attend and take full advantage of the advice and supervision freely afforded and at their disposal.

It is satisfactory to note that the number of expectant mothers who attended the Clinic during the year was nearly double that of the year before, viz, 55, compared with 30.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

No changes have taken place during the year as regards the following services, as detailed in the Annual Reports for 1930 and 1934.
Nursing in the Home, Laboratory facilities, Legislation in force, Hospitals, Ambulance facilities, Clinics and Treatment Centres.

The Ironbridge and District Child Welfare Centre is supported by the Local Authority, and is provided by a Voluntary Association, with assistance from Government grant and the County Council. The Centre is in Ironbridge, in a house acquired and equipped for the purpose. This Centre continues to do most excellent work and to secure consistently large attendances of mothers and infants. During the year the attendances were as follows:-

	New Cases.	Total Cases.	Total Attendances.
Infants under 1 year ..	127	172	1498
Infants 1 to 5 years ..	20	197	2382
Expectant mothers ..	55	59	95

This is also a County Council local centre for orthopaedic work in connection with the Shropshire Orthopaedic Hospital and also a dental clinic for school children.

Hospital Isolation. In the absence of any material progress towards the provision of a County Hospital, the Town Council continues its arrangement for the admission of urgent cases to the Shrewsbury and Atcham Joint Isolation Hospital, by payment.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water Supply. Madeley and Broseley Wards. The Joint Committee managing the Harrington deep bore scheme and system of supply to these Wards, to part of Barrow Ward, and to some areas outside the Borough, was proceeding during the year, after obtaining Official Sanction to the necessary loan, with the new boring at Beckbury, to some 700 feet depth, to supplement the supply. Shifnal R.D.C. discontinued its connection with this scheme in September, but the Council's Water Engineer reports a gradual increase of demand both within these Wards and also in the Dawley U.D., Oakengates U.D., and Wellington R.D.

The supply was constant and the quantity and quality good. A chemical analysis made by the County Analyst shortly after the close of the year was very satisfactory.

The report showed:-

Total Solids ..	39.0 parts per 100,000
Nitrogen in Nitrates	0.4 " " "
Chlorine in Chlorides	1.8 " " "
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hours at 80° F.	0.02
Free and Saline Ammonia	Nil.
Albuminoid Ammonia	Nil.
Metals	Nil.

The Supply has not, so far, been controlled bacteriologically, but when so examined has been found pure. I have advised that a routine of full bacteriological examination be made at six monthly intervals, and instructions have been given by the Water Committee.

Water was laid on to the Council's Madeley Housing Estate with 385 yards of 3 inch main, and 286 yards of 1½ inch main were laid in Coalbrookdale for ten houses built, or reconstructed, by private enterprise, while some 2,200 feet of service pipe were laid for new W.C. connections chiefly in connection with extensive conversion of privies in the newly sewered areas in Madeley and Ironbridge.

In Broseley Ward the Water Engineer reports the water laid on to two new houses and to a new Public Convenience, and extensions of 1500 feet of service pipe to properties, mostly for W.C. conversions. Mr. Callear also notes that "Owing to frequent "movement of ground near Jackfield Church the old 3" Cast Iron main "(which was a remnant of the Old Sutton Water Supply) has been "disbanded and replaced by two inch galvanised pipe. This was "carried out by me in May last, since which time there has been no "further trouble." Also that "New Building, Housing, Slum "Clearance, and Sewage Schemes, and a rapid conversion to Water "Closets, will eventually require the amount of water that Shifnal "used to take."

In both Districts there were many improvements in Water Supply to Licenced Houses for the proper flushing of W.C's and urinals.

Benthall Parish (Barrow Ward). Harrington Water was laid on to one new house and a further extension to Bower Yard, Ironbridge.

The Water Committee has laid down strict instructions as to precautions to be taken against contamination when any work is proceeding at the well.

Much Wenlock Water Supply. This spring supply to the town was constant during the year and the quality good. No analysis was made, but a sample is now to be submitted to bacteriological examination.

No shortage of supply was reported in other parts of the District.

Drainage, Sewerage and Closet Accommodation. The information following, furnished by the Sanitary Inspector, shows that Mr. Thomas has followed up very actively the facilities for improved drainage and house sanitation afforded by the completion of new sewerage schemes in the Madeley Ward, and has by advice, assistance, and supervision secured a marked advance in sanitation and amenity.

A sewerage scheme, necessary in connection with the new Housing Estate and Slum Clearance programme at Broseley, was submitted to the Ministry of Health and was the subject of a Public Enquiry in November. The completion of this Scheme, when sanctioned, will enable further progress to be made in privy conversions.

The Sanitary Inspector reports:-

"Drainage and Sewerage. The Works of sewerage and sewage "disposal in the Madeley Ward, situate at Madeley and Hill Top, "Ironbridge, were finally completed during the year, and "approximately 500 yards of new sewer were laid.

"House drainage. Considerable progress has been made at "Madeley since the completion of the sewerage disposal scheme. "New drainage systems installed and connected to the sewer during "the year number 145.

"Stream Pollution. No complaint was received during the "year with regard to pollution.

"Closet Accommodation. The privies converted to water "closets during the year number 161, and of these 150 are at "Madeley. Attention is being given to the provision of water "closets where suitable drainage facilities exist.

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"Scavenging. The arrangements continue for removal of night "soil and house refuse weekly in Madeley Ward, and of house refuse in "Broseley Ward, and the town of Much Wenlock."

The following is an Account furnished by the Sanitary Inspector, of Sanitary Work for the year.

Number of houses which have been inspected during the above period, either in connection with outbreaks of infectious disease, or in consequence of complaints, or in the course of a systematic Sanitary Survey	1370
Number of legal notices sent	38
Number of informal notices sent	15
Number of such notices complied with ..	15
Number of letters written	285

PARTICULARS OF SANITARY MATTERS REFERRED TO IN THE ABOVE NOTICES:-

(a) Houses to be cleansed after Infectious Disease ..	27
(b) Deficient or objectionable water supply ..	-
(c) New drains to be constructed or old drains to be amended	204
(d) New closets to be provided or old ones to be amended in construction	6
(e) Houses damp or dirty, or admitting rain, or weather, or otherwise in a bad sanitary condition ..	33
(f) Offensive accumulations of all kinds ..	3
(g) Animals so kept as to be a nuisance ..	1
(h) Houses overcrowded	153

Houses disinfected after infectious disease (other than phthisis)	15
Houses disinfected in cases of phthisis ..	12
Privies converted to water closets	161
Privies converted to earth closets	-
Plans for new houses passed	84
Certificates issued for water supply to new houses ..	140
Houses connected to public water supply ..	169
Repairs to public pumps and wells	1
New public wells	-
Private wells reconstructed or improved ..	1
Houses connected to public sewerage	301
Lengths of new sewers laid ..	approx. 500 yds.
Lengths of new water mains laid	671 yds.

Proceedings before Magistrates: Two.

C. J. THOMAS.

Sanitary Inspector.

Shops. Six W.C's were installed in shops during the year. No action, the Inspector reports, was found necessary with regard to ventilation, etc.

Smoke Abatement. No complaints were received, or nuisance observed.

Swimming Baths and Pools. There are none.

Eradication of bed bugs. The Inspector reports:- "No "Council or other house has been found to be infested, and no "action has, so far, been found necessary.

"As regards the methods employed for ensuring that the "belongings of tenants are free from vermin before removing to "Council houses, an inspection is made by the Sanitary Inspector "to whom the tenants are all well known through frequent visits "for various purposes. In any case of doubt a sulphur and "formaldehyde lamp is placed in all rooms.

"Schools. Improvement was made at the Madeley Methodist "school by the provision of water closets during the year, while the "substitution of pan closets in lieu of trough closets was contemplated "at two other schools at the end of the year.

"Public Convenience. The Public Convenience at Broseley "referred to in the last annual report, was completed during the year, "to a plan and specification prepared by the Sanitary Inspector."

HOUSING STATISTICS.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the Year:-

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ..	195
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ..	195
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ..	48
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ..	48
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	36
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ..	72

2. Remedy of Defects during the Year without Service of formal Notices:-

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	68

3. Action under Statutory Powers during the Year:-

(a) Proceedings under sections 9, 10, and 16, of the Housing Act, 1936:	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	-
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:-	
(a) By owners	-
(b) By local authority in default of owners ..	-
(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ..	-
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:-	
(a) By owners	-
(b) By local authority in default of owners ..	-
(c) Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	6
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	17
(d) Proceedings under section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936:	
(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made ..	-
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ..	-

4. Housing Act 1936 - Part IV - Overcrowding:-

(a) (i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year .. 153
(ii) Number of families dwelling therein .. 161
(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein .. 936

(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year .. 1

(c) (i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year .. 16
(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases .. 104

(d) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding .. -

(e) Any other particulars with respect to overcrowding conditions upon which the Medical Officer of Health may consider it desirable to report.

Arrangements were made during the year by the four wards to erect a considerable number of houses to relieve overcrowding.

Housing Consolidated Amendment Regulations 1932.

(3) The number of representations made to the Local Authority with a view to (a) the service of notices requiring the execution of works or (b) the making of demolition or closing orders;
(a) .. -
(b) .. 36

(7) The number of houses in respect of which an undertaking was accepted under subsection (2) of Section 19 of the Housing Act, 1930; .. nil.

Very good progress continues to be made towards the improvement of housing conditions. In an area in which so much of the cottage property is of old construction, dating mainly from the early days of industrial activity and expansion, much of it is outworn, and more is lacking in modern requirements of amenity and convenience. The raising of the standard of housing is therefore a matter which will require much care, and some time. The active and careful work of Mr. Thomas in connection with the detailed survey of Clearance Areas, and representation of unfit houses, again calls for recognition. In his report he states:-

"Slum Clearance. The Council's five year programme ending "at the end of the year 1938 was intended to deal with 140 houses. "The following is an account of the number of houses dealt with.

"Clearance Orders already confirmed by the Ministry.	Areas 16.	Houses 69
"Clearance Orders proposed and for which a public inquiry was pending at the end of the year.	Areas 8.	" 21
"Individual unfit houses on which demolition or closing orders have been made ..		73
	Total	163

"The number of persons rehoused and to be rehoused in "connection with the clearance of the above mentioned houses is some "578 or 4.2% of the population of the Borough."

"With regard to the repair of old houses, the procedure has "been by informal notice and personal representation with much success. "Of 72 houses found to be in some respects defective, 68 have been "repaired satisfactorily, the remainder being in hand at the end of "the year."

"New Houses. In Broseley Ward plans were passed during the year "for the erection of 50 Council houses at Broseley, to rehouse "displaced tenants from clearance areas, individual unfit houses, and "overcrowded houses, a small number also to be built to let at economic "rents.

"In Much Wenlock Ward plans for 24 Council houses were passed:

"To rehouse tenants of individual unfit houses ..	9
" " " overcrowded families	4
"In connection with a road improvement scheme ..	2
"To let at economic rent	9
	24

Housing Rural Workers Act 1926.

No. of houses for which grants were made during the year ..	2
No. of houses in which improvements were completed during the year ..	nil
No. still in hand at end of year	2
Total number of houses completed since 1926 under the Act or in hand ..	23

The grant was for the reconditioning of two farm cottages.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Inspection of Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops for the year.

Number of Cowkeepers and Milksellers on register	Wholesalers	14
	Retailers	66
	Total	80
Number of premises - cowsheds		99
dairies		76
milkshops		1
Total number of premises registered		80
Number of inspections		105
Defects found (1) in cowsheds: (a) floor or cubic space ..		2
(b) ventilation		4
(c) lighting		2
(d) structure of floor ..		3
(e) drainage		1
(f) cleanliness		3
(2) in surroundings of cowsheds ..		1
(3) in sanitary condition of drains ..		1
(4) in sanitary condition of milkshops ..		-
(5) in water supply		-
Number of notices - verbal and written ..		17
Number of these notices complied with ..		17
Number of defects found and not yet remedied ..		-
Number of premises reconstructed or radically improved during the year ..		1

Number of Tuberculin Tested (Certified) milk sellers in District at end of year	-
" " Tuberculin Tested " " " " " "	1
" " Pasteurised " " " " " "	1
" " Accredited " " " " " "	15

C. J. THOMAS.
Sanitary Inspector.

The Inspector takes samples of Pasteurised milk, from a plant licensed by the Council in the District, for bacteriological examination periodically.

Action taken as regards tuberculous cattle. One cow was found, by the Borough Veterinary Inspector, to be affected by tuberculosis with emaciation and was slaughtered under the Tuberculosis Order 1935.

Meat and Other Foods. The Inspector states:-

"There are 15 slaughter houses in the Borough, but a "considerable amount of meat consumed is slaughtered at the "Public Abattoir, Shrewsbury.

"Weekly inspections were made of the meat deposited for sale "at the Ironbridge market, the whole of which is slaughtered outside "the Borough."

Carcases Inspected and Condemned.

	Cattle, excluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
Number killed approx. ..	1066	-	62	3120	2440
Number inspected ..	980	-	58	2980	2345
All diseases except Tuberculosis. Whole carcases condemned ..	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..	16	-	-	65	5
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis ..	1.63	-	-	2.18	0.21
Tuberculosis only. Whole carcases condemned ..	-	-	-	-	1
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..	9	-	-	-	62
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	0.9	-	-	-	2.68

Bakehouses. There are 21 in the Borough: kept generally in good condition; appropriate action for cleanliness is taken when necessary.

Sale of Food & Drugs Act. During the year samples were taken for analysis as follows, under the direction of the County Chief Constable, acting for the Borough Council.

Nature of Sample.		Genuine.	Adulterated.
Milk	..	16	-
Vinegar	..	1	-
Sausages	..	1	-
Brawn	..	1	-
Potted Meat	..	1	-
	Total	20	-

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Diphtheria Antitoxin is supplied by the Sanitary Committee, free of cost to cases of the poorer class, through local chemists who supply medical men upon request. Antitoxin is in general use in all but very slight cases.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Health's Memorandum of July, 1922, the chemists contracting have been instructed to hold and supply Antitoxin in phials containing 8,000 units for treatment and 500 units for prophylactic purposes.

Diphtheria Immunisation. No application was made for immunisation under the scheme adopted by the Council in 1936.

Disinfection. This is carried out as a routine measure by the Sanitary Inspector in cases of notified infectious disease, and after death, or removal, of cases of phthisis.
Formalin spray, or formalin vapor lamps, are used.

Incidence of notifiable infectious disease was slight.

No case of diphtheria came to light.

Sixteen cases of Scarlet fever were notified during the year. With the exception of one case in Barrow Ward in January, and three in Broseley Ward in September and October, all the cases came to notice in November and December in Madeley Ward. The cases were of mild nature, the majority being very slight. All cases were visited and precautions taken. All were home nursed and there was no spread in any case beyond the patient affected.

Cerebro-spinal meningitis. One case was notified in August, in a boy of 14 years. I investigated the case but the origin of infection was quite obscure. The boy was removed to a General Hospital and died there in spite of active and repeated serum injections.

Notifiable Diseases during the Year.

Disease	Total cases notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Small-pox	-	-	-
Scarlet fever	16	-	-
Diphtheria	-	-	-
Enteric fever (including Paratyphoid)	-	-	-
Puerperal fever	2	2	-
Puerperal pyrexia	-	-	-
Pneumonia	2	2	14
Cerebro-spinal fever	1	1	1

Ophthalmia Neonatorum	Cases			Vision un-impaired	Vision impaired	Total Blindness	Deaths
	Notified	Treated					
		At home	In hospital				
	Nil	-	-	-	-	-	-